

Nov. 18 / Administration of George W. Bush, 2001

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the Deployment of United States Military Personnel as Part of the Kosovo International Security Force

November 18, 2001

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

In my report to the Congress of May 18, 2001, I provided information regarding the continued deployment of combat-equipped U.S. military personnel as the U.S. contribution to the NATO-led international security force in Kosovo (KFOR) and to other countries in the region in support of that force. I am providing this supplemental report, consistent with the War Powers Resolution, to help ensure that Congress is kept fully informed on continued U.S. contributions in support of peace-keeping efforts in Kosovo.

As noted in previous reports, the U.N. Security Council authorized member states to establish KFOR in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1244 of June 10, 1999. The mission of KFOR is to provide a military presence in order to deter renewed hostilities; verify and, if necessary, enforce the terms of the Military Technical Agreement (MTA) between NATO and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY); enforce the terms of the Undertaking on Demilitarization and Transformation of the former Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA); provide day-to-day operational direction to the Kosovo Protection Corps; and maintain a safe and secure environment to facilitate the work of the U.N. Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK).

Currently, the U.S. contribution to KFOR in Kosovo is approximately 5,500 U.S. military personnel. An additional 500 U.S. military personnel are deployed as the National Support Element in Macedonia, with an occasional presence in Albania and Greece. In the last 6 months, all 19 NATO nations and 19 others, including Russia, have provided military personnel and other

support personnel to KFOR in Kosovo and other countries in the region.

In Kosovo, the U.S. forces are assigned to a sector principally centered upon Gnjilane in the eastern portion of Kosovo. For U.S. KFOR forces, as for KFOR generally, maintaining a safe and secure environment remains the primary military task. United States forces conduct security patrols in urban areas and in the countryside throughout their sector. Approximately 79 percent of KFOR soldiers are dedicated to patrolling, manning checkpoints, and mounting border and boundary patrols. The KFOR forces operate under NATO command and control and rules of engagement.

The UNMIK continues to make progress in establishing the necessary structures for provisional democratic self-government in Kosovo, including through adoption of the Constitutional Framework for Provisional Self-Government, and preparations for Kosovo-wide elections scheduled to occur on November 17, 2001. The KFOR coordinates with and supports UNMIK at most levels, and is represented at the Joint Implementation Commission. Also, KFOR support includes providing a security presence in towns, villages, and the countryside, and organizing checkpoints and patrols in key areas of Kosovo to provide security, protect minorities, resolve disputes, and help instill in the community a feeling of confidence. Finally, KFOR is supporting, within its means and capabilities, the provision of humanitarian relief, public safety and order, and the maintenance of essential civic works resources.

NATO continues formally to review KFOR's mission at 6-month intervals. The most recent 6-month review will be completed this month, and presented to the

North Atlantic Council in December 2001. These reviews provide a basis for assessing current force levels, future requirements, force structure, force reductions, and the eventual withdrawal of KFOR. The KFOR has transferred full responsibility for its public safety and policing responsibilities to the UNMIK international and local police forces in every area except Kosovska Mitrovica, where the responsibility is shared due to security concerns.

The continued deployment of U.S. forces has been undertaken pursuant to my con-

stitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive. I appreciate the continued support of the Congress in these actions.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Robert C. Byrd, President pro tempore of the Senate.

Remarks on Signing the Aviation and Transportation Security Act *November 19, 2001*

Thank you all very much. Today we take permanent and aggressive steps to improve the security of our airways. The events of September the 11th were a call to action, and the Congress has now responded.

The law I will sign should give all Americans greater confidence when they fly. All Members of Congress care deeply about this issue. Despite divergent views, the Congress worked closely with my administration to develop a bipartisan conclusion that will help protect American air travelers.

I want to thank the House and Senate leadership for their patience in this issue. I want to thank the Speaker and the minority leader, the leader of the Senate, Senator Lott, for working hard to make sure this bill came to fruition.

I also want to thank Chairman Don Young and John Mica and Jim Oberstar who have joined us today from the House. I want to thank you for your hard work. And I want to thank Members of the United States Senate: Chairman Hollings and John McCain and Kay Bailey Hutchison for their hard work.

I appreciate so very much the Secretary of Transportation and his steadiness and

his ability to bring confidence to the process. I picked a good man in Norm Mineta, who is rising to the occasion.

I also want to thank his deputy, Michael Jackson, for his hard work. As well, I appreciate Jane Garvey joining us up here today. I see other Members of Congress who are here. Thank you all for coming. I appreciate you doing the right thing for America.

I also want to thank the pilots and flight attendants and the people of the airline industry who have joined us today. I want to thank you for your courage in the face of terror. I want to thank you for inspiring confidence amongst the American people.

The broad support for this bill shows that our country is united in this crisis. We have our political differences, but we're united to defend our country. And we're united to protect our people. For our airways, there is one supreme priority: security.

Since September the 11th, the Federal Government has taken action to raise safety standards. We've made funds available to the aviation industry to fortify cockpits. More Federal air marshals now ride on our